COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS

STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Post-Deployment Resilience Training For Spouses/Couples

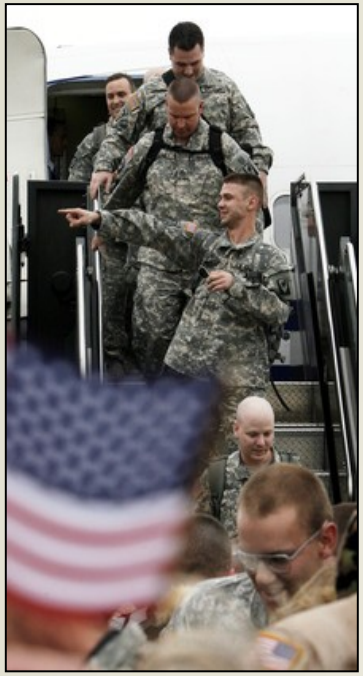
Coming Home

It took resilience for you and your Family to get through the deployment

What can you expect now during reintegration?

Combat Veteran's Paradox

After returning home, Soldiers are usually happy to be back home …*but they may feel edgy and pissed off*…



Reunion Paradox

After the Soldier returns home, Family members are usually happy to be reunited …*but they may be anxious too*…

Soldier Changes

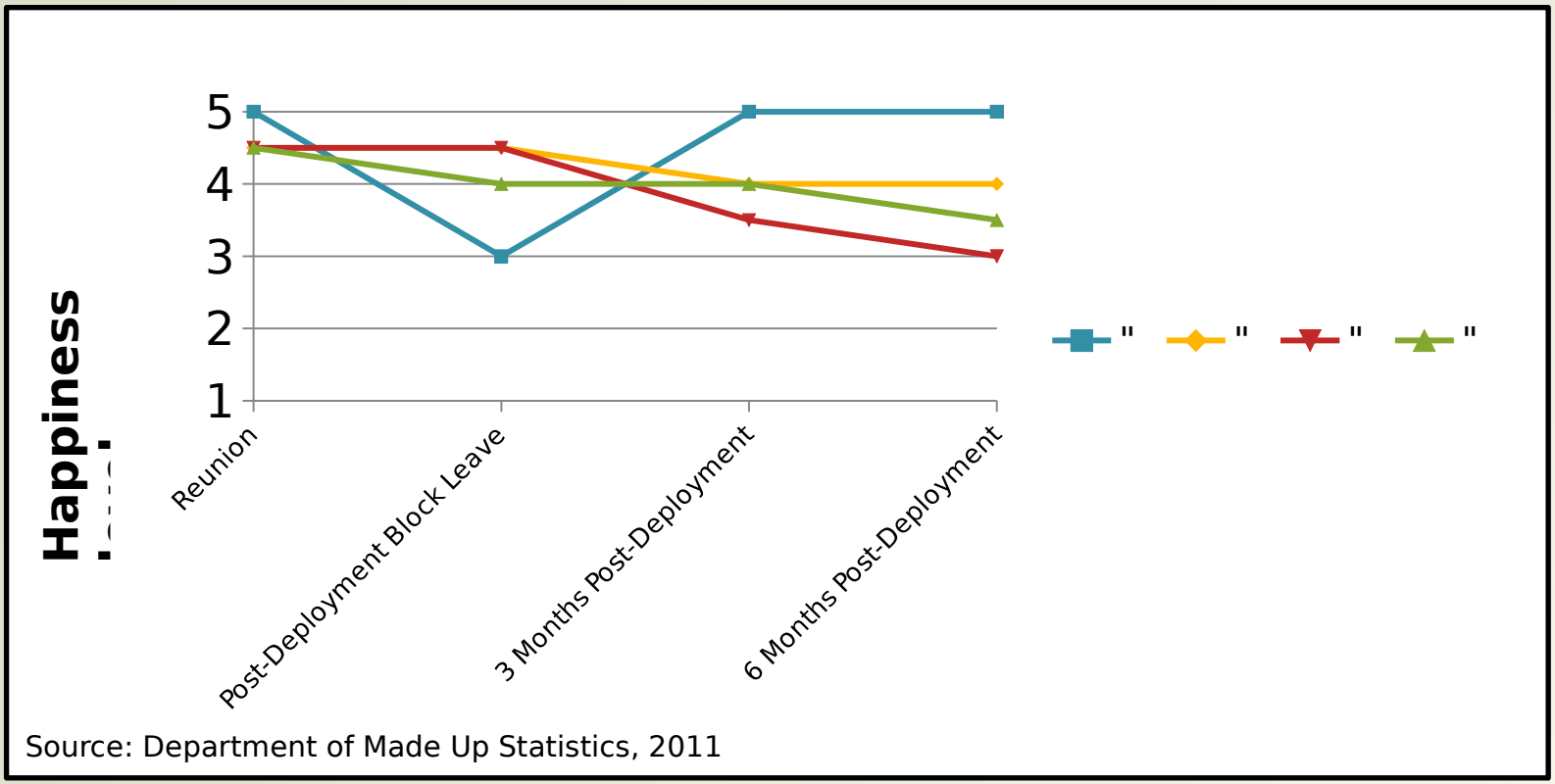
- How might some Soldiers be different?
  - Appreciative
  - Startle easily, hyper-alert
  - Emotionally numb
  - Driving habits
  - Easily irritated
  - Alcohol use
  - Battle buddies
  - Sleep problems
  - Pride
- Which of these are combat skills?

Family Member Changes

- How might some Family members be different?
  - Appreciative
  - Independent
  - Tired
  - New friends
  - Ready for help with household
  - Children's reactions
  - Pride
- The changes may vary over the course of different deployments

Individual Patterns of Reintegration

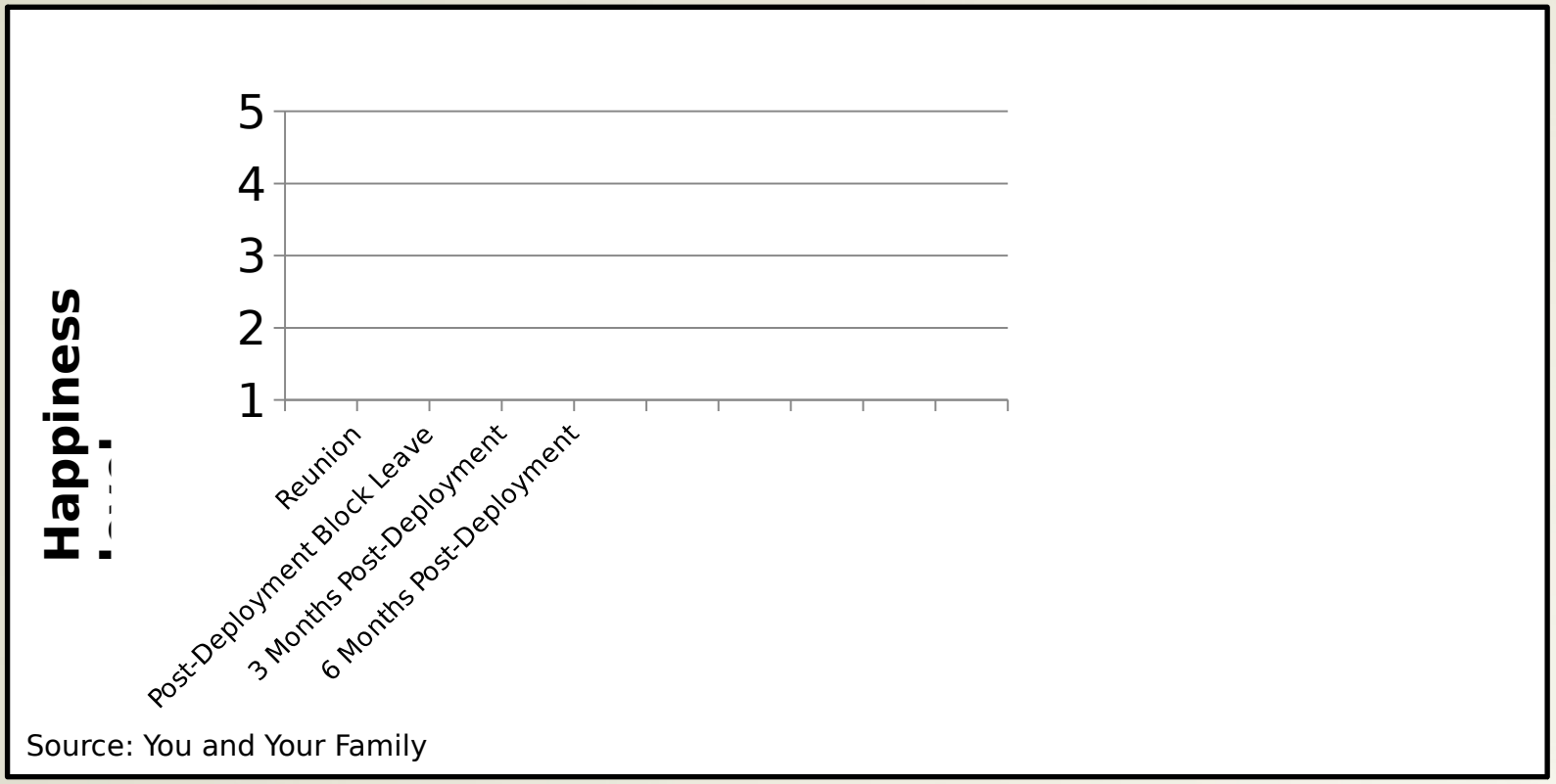
- Remember ups and downs are normal
- Everyone has their own ups and downs



Source: Department of Made Up Statistics, 2011

Activity: Individual Patterns of Reintegration

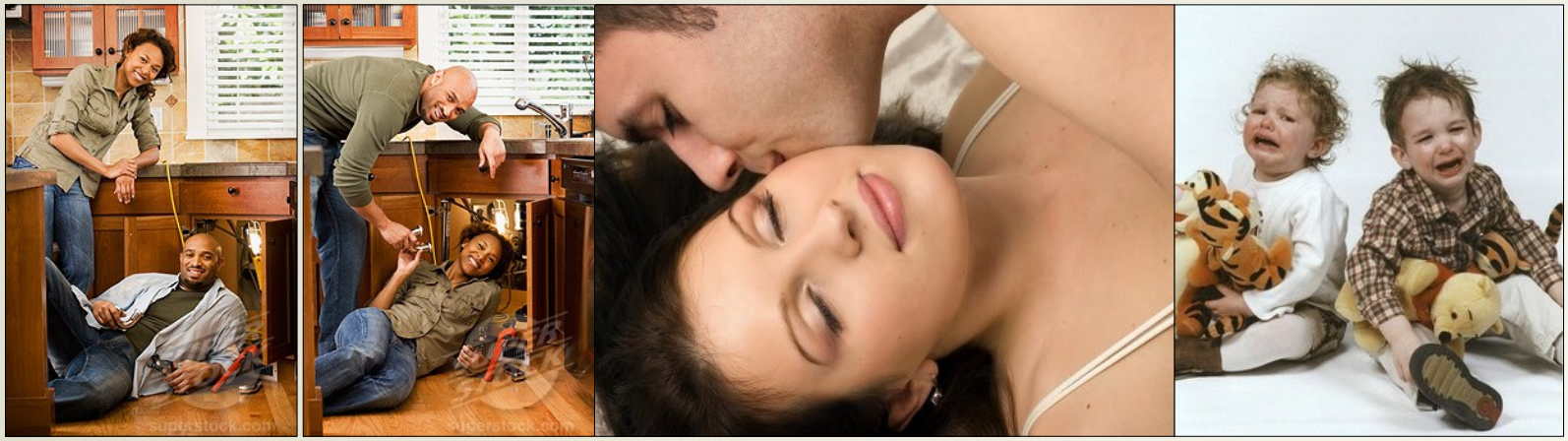
- How has reintegration been for you and your Family?



Source: You and Your Family

Dream vs. Dream

- Expectations about reintegration
  - Readjusting roles
  - How quickly to let extended Family members and friends be part of the reunion
  - Physical intimacy
- Soldiers and Spouses may have different images of how the reintegration will go…



Relationship Strengths

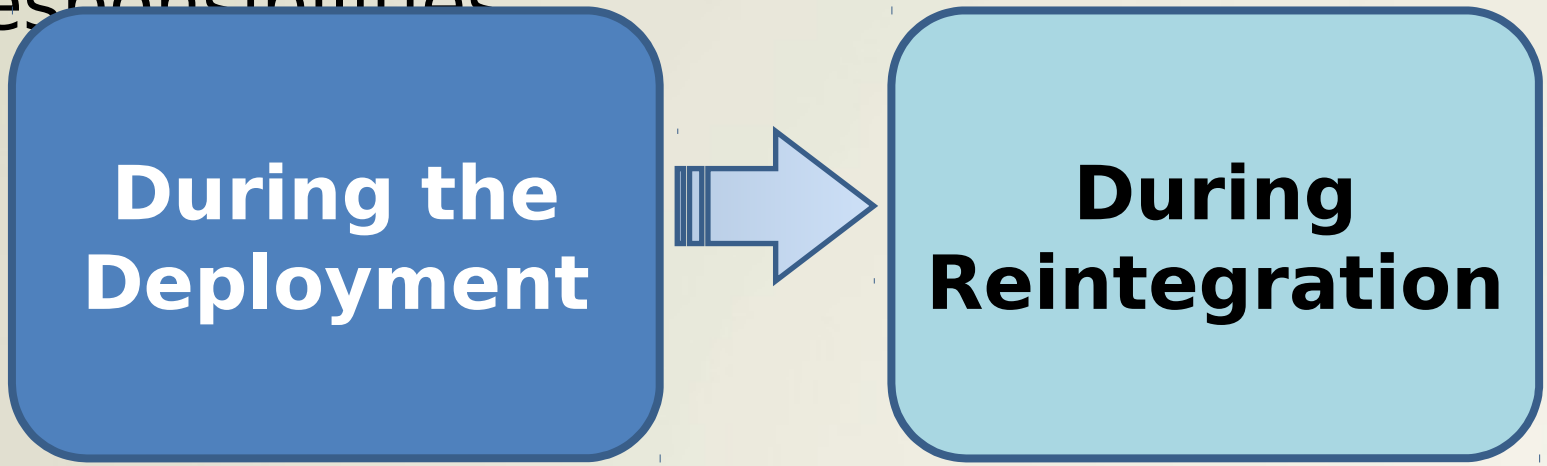
- Think about the strengths you and your Family used during the deployment that helped you to be resilient
  - Which strengths were the most helpful?
- You can adapt these strengths to help you and your Family during reintegration

Signature Family Strengths

- Adapting roles and responsibilities
- Creating and reinforcing connections
- Committing to the relationship
- Sharing experiences

Strength: Adapting Roles & Responsibilities

- During the deployment you and your Family were flexible in adopting new roles and responsibilities



- How can you adapt this strength?

Activity: Adapting Roles & Responsibilities

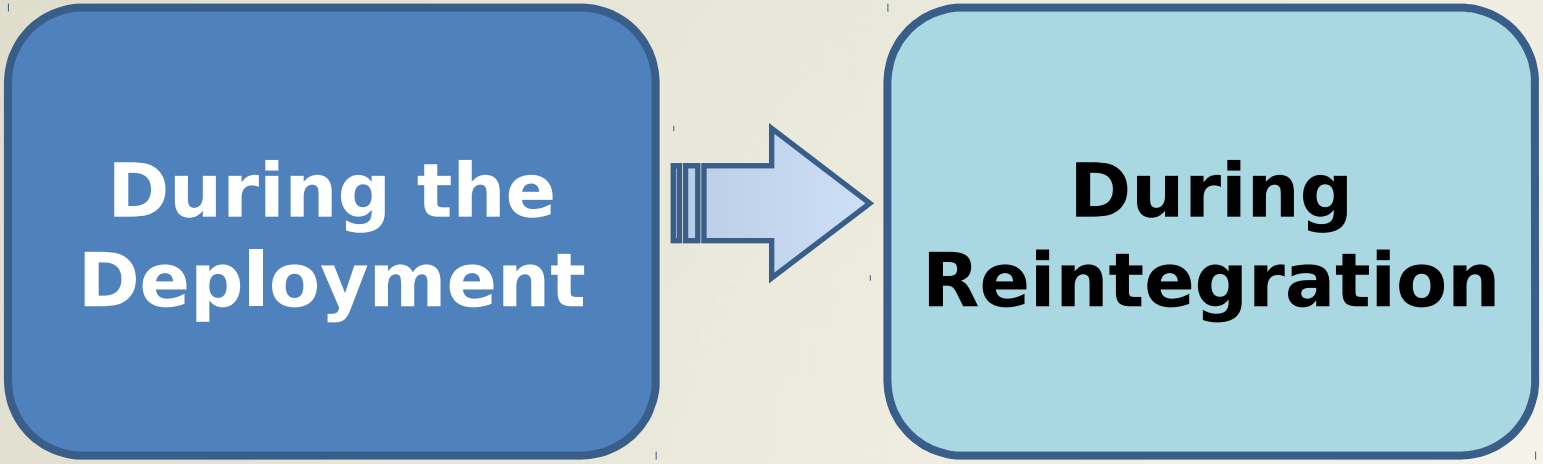
- Find a partner to complete this activity
- Work through “Adapting Roles and Responsibilities”– see student handout
- Take about 10 minutes for this activity

Activity: Adapting Roles & Responsibilities

- Debrief:
  - If you did this activity without your Spouse, how different would this activity be?
  - What is the value of knowing which roles and responsibilities each Spouse will have?

Strength: Creating & Reinforcing Connections

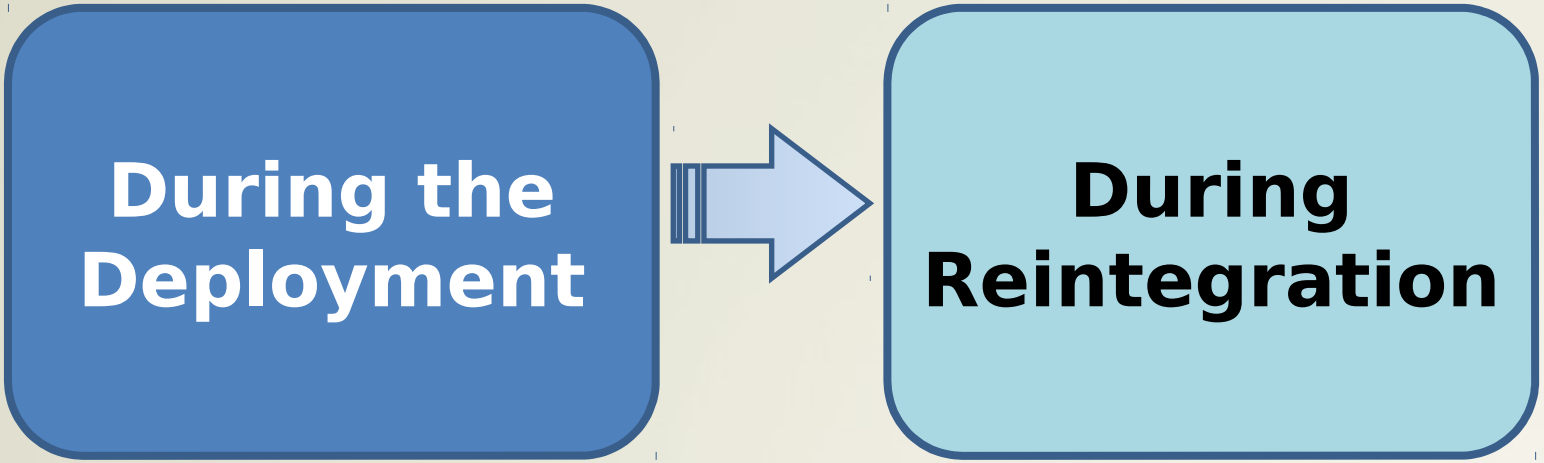
- During the deployment, you may have strengthened existing relationships and made new friends



- How can you adapt this strength?

Strength: Committing to the Relationship

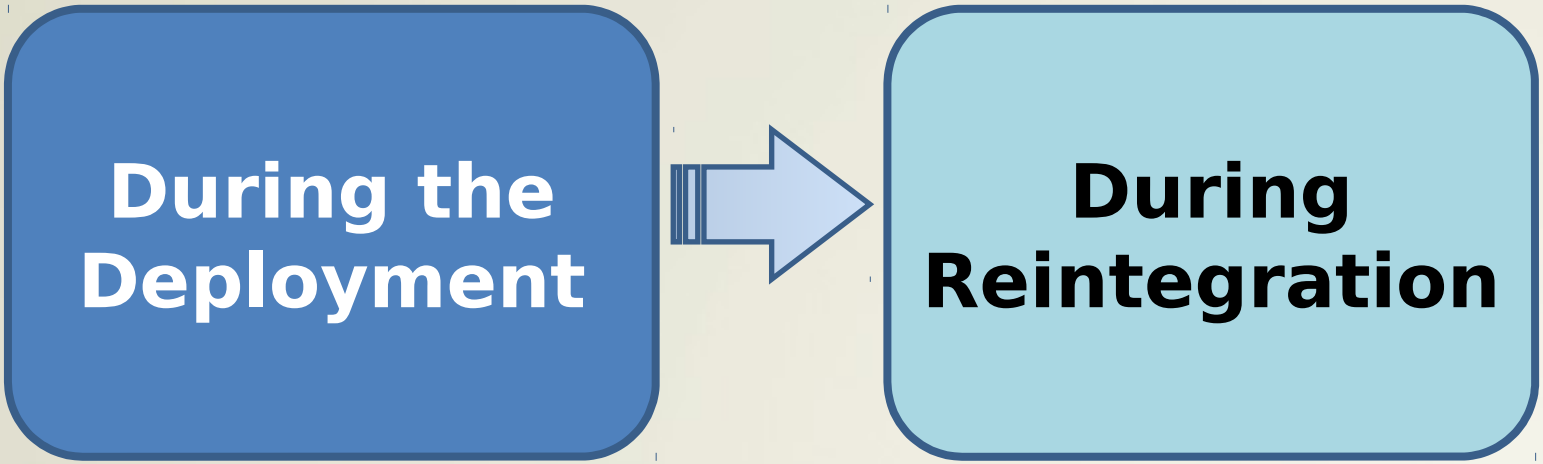
- Before and during the deployment, you showed your commitment to each other



- How can you adapt this strength?

Strength: Sharing Experiences

- During the deployment it may have been necessary to regulate the content of what you shared with each other



- How can you adapt this strength?

Signature Family Strengths

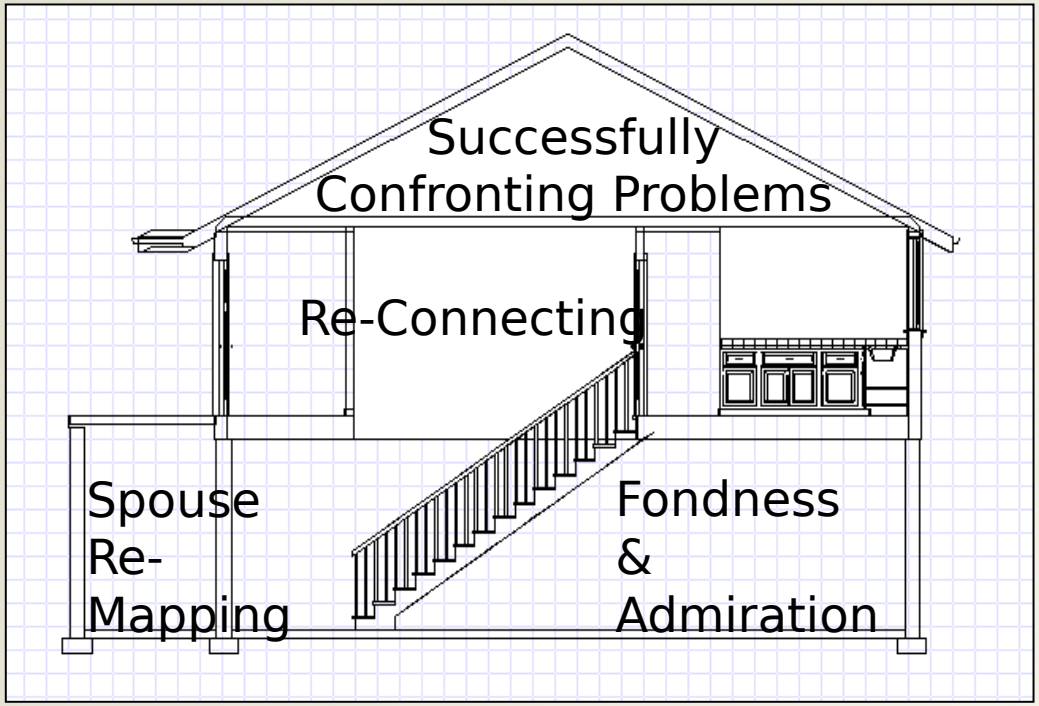
- Adapting Roles and Responsibilities
- Creating and Reinforcing Connections
- Committing to the Relationship
- Sharing Experiences

- Which is your best strength as a Family?

- Reinforce your Family's resilience through the **Sound Marital House…**

Reinforcing Your Sound Marital House

- Re-Create a loving friendship
- Confront problems successfully
- Increase your positivity ratio



Re-Connecting

- Enhances the quality of your relationship
- Shortens and smoothes out the disagreements
- Reduces the stress in your relationship
- It’s like money in the bank

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Re-Create a Loving Friendship

- Get reacquainted with each other with post-deployment Spouse Re-Mapping
  - Get to know what matters to your Spouse (old and new)
  - Get to know your Spouse's new social network (friends/buddies)
  - Get to know how your Spouse's preferences may have changed
- Re-build fondness and admiration
- Rekindle the romance

Loving Friendship

- Pos[illegible]ment Spouse R[illegible]

Is having

Now prefers to [illegible]tch [illegible]s at [illegible] not go to movie[illegible]king

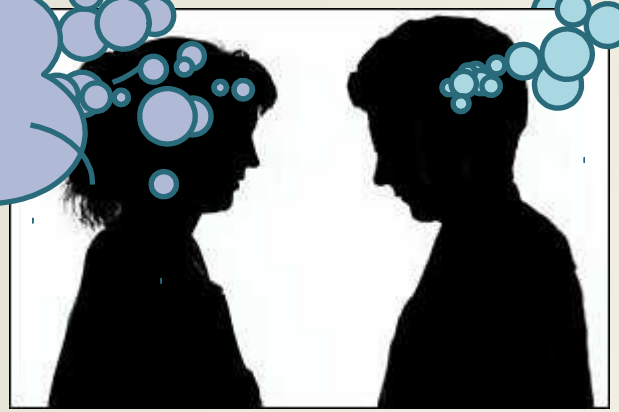
Now [illegible]

Sex and Spooning

d to

Swi[illegible] bo[illegible]

Can't look at broccoli anymore



Now prefers DVDs at home rather than going out to the movies

New hob[illegible] paintin[illegible]

do [illegible]more

Sex and Spooning

[illegible] new [illegible]riends

Still doesn't [illegible]es like peas

[illegible]ut [illegible]ed to skim milk

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Activity: Spouse Re-Mapping

- Move to break-out rooms
- Divide into teams of two
- Work through Spouse Re-Mapping – see student handout
- Take about 10 minutes for this activity

Activity: Spouse Re-Mapping

- Debrief:
  - If you did this exercise without your Spouse, how different would this activity be with your Spouse?
  - What is the value of knowing these kinds of details about your Spouse?
  - How does it feel to know that your Spouse has changed?

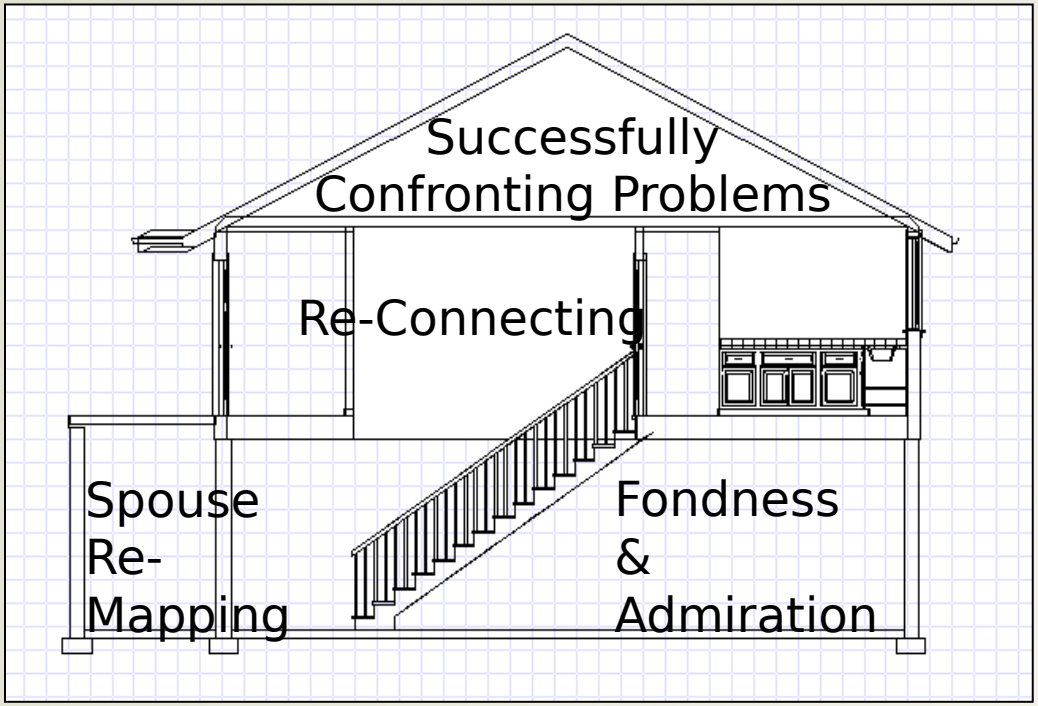
Loving Friendship

- Fondness and Admiration
  - Reinforce by remembering your Spouse's contributions to the relationship
  - Focus on thoughts about your Spouse
    - What initially attracted you
    - What currently attracts you
  - How do you use fondness and admiration t your loving frien

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Reinforcing Your Sound Marital House

- Re-create a loving friendship
- Confront problems successfully
- Increase your positivity ratio



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Confronting Problems

- You can use Repair Attempts and Gentle Starts to make relationships more resilient when problems arise

Confronting Problems

- Sometimes communications hit a speed bump
- Make and accept "*Repair Attempts*"
  - An attempt to defuse the tension
  - Examples: *Agreeing to disagree, gentle banter, sticking out tongue, funny statements like "drop and give me twenty," making a face*
- Accept your partner's influence
- Directly confronting problems…

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Activity: Repair Attempts

- Move to break-out rooms
- Divide into groups of two or three
- Work through Repair Attempts – see student handout
- Take about 10 minutes for this activity

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Activity: Repair Attempts

- Debrief:
  - After a mistake, you can try to make it right:

Marriage Coach
(*click here*)

Activity: Marriage Coach

- Debrief
  - What strengths does this Couple have?
  - What Repair Attempts did you notice?

Confronting Problems

How we say it is as important as what we say

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Confronting Problems

- Gentle Start:
  - Time your communication
  - Limit your concern to a specific complaint
  - Don’t store complaints and unload them all at once
  - Use “I” Statements: “*I feel* _____*when you* ____*; I would prefer if you would* ____.”
  - Choose the right emotional tone

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Confronting Problems

- Harsh Start:
  - Begin with a negative or accusatory tone
  - Jump immediately to criticism and/or contempt
  - Use The Four Horsemen

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

The Four Horsemen

- The Four Horsemen:
  - Criticism
  - Contempt
  - Defensiveness
  - Stonewalling

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Criticism vs. Kindness

- Definition: A global complaint that typically includes a personality or character attack
- Event: Soldier doesn't take out the trash as he had promised
  - Criticism: *"You're a terrible husband; you don't care about this Family!"*
  - Kind Request: *"I know you have a lot going on. I would appreciate it if you took out the trash."*

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Contempt vs. Respect

- Definition: Mocking attitude or sarcasm that typically includes moral disgust
- Event: Spouse makes a mistake in the check book
  - Contempt: "*Hey genius, you screwed up the check book again! How come you can't get it right, you've had a year to learn this while I was deployed*?"
  - Respectful Request: "*Honey, you did a good job of taking care of the finances while I was deployed, but I noticed the check book is a little off. Can we sit down and figure this out?"*

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Defensiveness vs. Acknowledgement

- Definition: Warding off a perceived attack rather than listening to the concern
- Event: Spouse says "*You're angry all the time since you got back. You're picking fights with everyone*."
  - Defensiveness: "*Leave me alone. If you'd give me some space I wouldn't have to yell at you all the time*."
  - Acknowledging Need for Improvement: *"Sorry, I guess I have been angry a lot lately. They told us this may happen for a while. If it doesn't improve, I'll go talk to somebody."*

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Stonewalling vs. Attending

- Definition: Withdrawing from an argument rather than listening or talking about a problem
- Event: Soldier gets another speeding ticket and Spouse wants to talk about it
  - Stonewalling: Soldier *turns up the TV and looks away from Spouse, ignoring the request.*
  - Attending to Unpleasant Topics: "*I guess I miss the adrenaline but you're right, I have been getting too many speeding tickets. I need to slow down*."

NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

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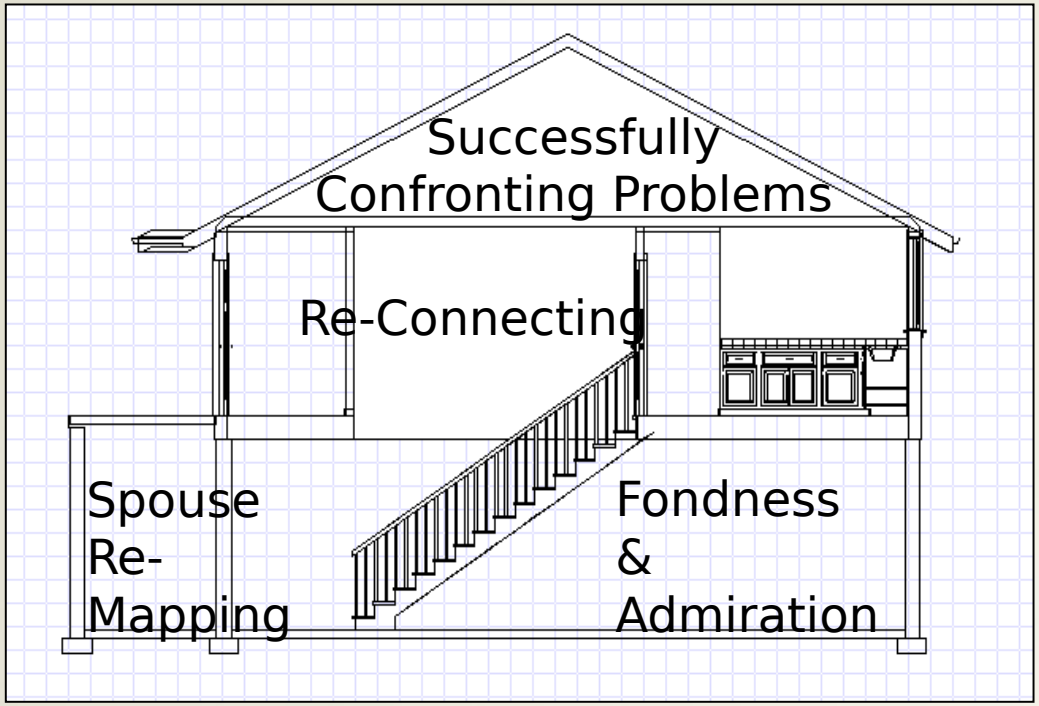
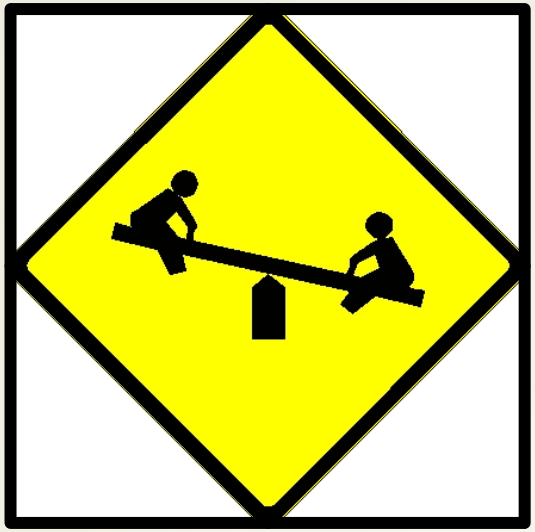


NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Your Positivity Ratio

- Your "Positivity Ratio" is the way you:
  - Think about your Spouse
  - Feel about your Spouse
  - Connect with your Spouse
- Unhappy Couples - *0.8:1*
- Happy Couples - *5:1*



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Positivity Ratio: Unhappy Couples

Scraped most of the ice off of

Kissed before leaving for work

Complained my Spouse

Refilled my coffee but

Watched TV instead of listening to Spouse

.8:1

Positivity Ratio: Happy Couples

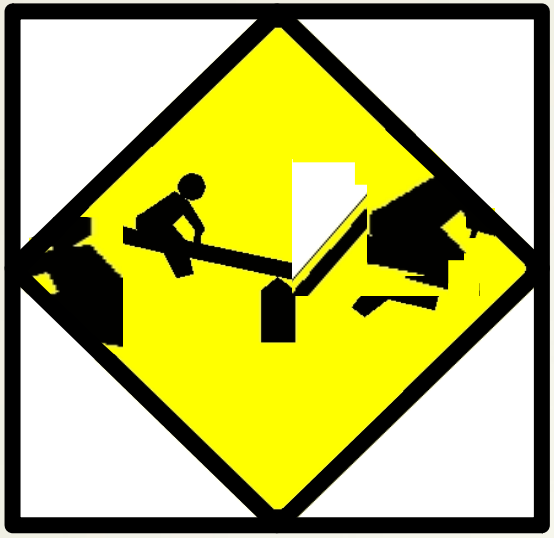
Complained my Spouse forgot to take out the garbage

Said "I love you" to Spouse

5:1

Your Positivity Ratio

- How might your "Positivity Ratio" be different after a deployment?
  - Competing for who had it worse…
- Re-establishing a Couple's Positivity Ratio
  - Thinking, feeling, and connecting as a Couple
  - Being kind to "the Couple"



NOTE: Adapted from Gottman

Active Constructive Responding

- Respond to each other with authentic, active and constructive interest
- Leaves Family members feeling validated and understood
- Builds strong Family relationships
- Praise leads to positive outcomes

NOTE: Adapted from Shelly Gable

Active Constructive Responding

	Constructive	Destructive
Active	*Showing authentic interest and asking meaningful questions enhances the conversation; Family member feels validated and understood*	*Squashing the event, brings conversation to a halt; Family member feels ashamed, embarrassed, guilty, or angry*
Passive	*Quiet, understated support; conversation fizzles out; Family member feels unimportant, misunderstood, embarrassed, or guilty*	*Ignoring the event; conversation never starts; Family member feels confused, guilty or disappointed*

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Active Constructive Responding

- Your Spouse tells you about a great deal she saw on a vacation package for block leave…

	Constructive	Destructive
Active	*"That's fantastic honey, I've always wanted to go there. How did you ever get such a great deal?"*	*"Why did you waste your time. I'd rather go fishing with my buddies. Next time ask before you make plans"*
Passive	*" That's nice."*	*"I need to get more milk for tomorrow."*

Which is your relationship strength?

- Compromise (de-escalate arguments)
- Time communication right
- Tolerate each other's weaknesses
- Be a calming influence for each other
- Hunt the good stuff
- Do the little things
- Other…?

Post-Deployment Family Growth & Development

- How have you and your Family grown from the deployment?
- How do you show you appreciate each other?
- Other ways?

Thank-you for your service!